

HOT SHEET

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Full-Circle HR



HR Trends:

- According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor & Statistics, workforce growth rates for individuals over 65 are projected to outpace those of individuals in all other age groups between 2014 & 2024.
- According to a SHRM employer survey, Veteran workers are more highly educated, perform better, and stay on the job longer than their civilian counterparts.
- Remote work may provide an excellent opportunity for including employees with disabilities in your workforce and connect you to an applicant pool that is underutilized.
- Salaries for college grads have grown 8.5% in the last two years; technical degrees are among those most in demand both at the Bachelor's and Master's levels.
- Tik Tok entered the recruitment business this summer with Tik Tok resumes; dozens of companies including Target, and Chipotle participated in a pilot program for 'video resumes' (more comparable to replacing a cover letter rather than being a resume).
- Variable pay programs, based on company performance, are rising in popularity as part of the compensation package.

Fostering a Culture of Kindness

The power of culture in the workplace is hard to overestimate. As the effects of COVID-19 in our communities and workplaces linger on and are combined with social and political divides, financial strain and fear for our families, it seems a good time to use this power to foster something that won't directly remedy these issues, but can make them more bearable. And, according to the American Psychological Association, kindness is not only the 'good' thing to do for others, it can also improve your mental and physical health. Mayo Clinic Staff offer the explanation that acts of kindness activate parts of your brain that feel

pleasure and increase levels of the hormone oxytocin. Oxytocin regulates our emotional responses and pro-social behaviors and is often associated with warm fuzzy feelings. In some studies it has been shown to relieve stress and anxiety.* In addition to reduced stress and anxiety, some other benefits of kindness may include: reduced inflammation; reduced pain; more energy; and increased lifespan. Both small and large acts—from holding the door for someone or speaking an impromptu kind word to helping someone move can have this effect. Prosocial behavior toward friends, strangers and even oneself or even the recollection of

such can have a positive impact on the sense of well-being. The greatest benefit comes with person-to-person contact, rather than indirectly online or otherwise. Furthermore, other studies have shown that folks who volunteer and who engage voluntarily in random acts of kindness engage in better self-care and may strengthen immune systems as well. Some tips for engendering a culture of kindness: Add a personal touch to your work routine—When sending a package or paperwork, add a personal note of greeting; Surprise a co-worker with their favorite cup of coffee or tea; Deliberately look for

what is good in anyone or any situation—we are a society that tends to see what is wrong so we can fix it and by doing that, we often miss what is right—and often there is far more that is 'right' than 'wrong;' See people and not tasks—in the hustle and bustle of getting things done we often launch into the task at hand before seeing the person and acknowledging them with a greeting or some recognition; Choose empathy; Celebrate others' successes; and Give the benefit of the doubt.

"I think we're named after computer passwords."

Prejudice is a great time-saver. You can form opinions without having to get the facts.
— E. B. White

Addressing Substance Use and Abuse At Work

A recent study by Lifeworks revealed that of US respondents who use alcohol or drugs, 31% reported an increase of alcohol consumption and 29% reported an increase of drug use during the pandemic.*** As we turn our attention to the safety and well-being of our employees, this is an area that requires a look at existing policies and procedures—perhaps even our philosophy about substance use disorder (SUD). New studies assert that addictions of all kinds are based in early trauma. If we believe this is true, and I do, then attention to mental health is desperately needed to help with addiction and, in particular, substance addiction and abuse.

Also, it is not unlikely that the stressors that have escalated during COVID

include finances, safety, health, emotional connection, grief, and more have escalated the sense of need to assuage these stressors with substances.

First and foremost is your responsibility to workplace safety, and if these issues are based in trauma, addressing them with only protective measures without compassion is sure to force them further underground. Understanding the source of all addiction might help us find compassion for those who have more destructive forms of addiction such as substance abuse. And this can help employers deal with the potential results of SUDs that include lower productivity, lower morale, undesirable culture shifts, and workplace safety issues. Managing this situation is a balancing act between human compas-

sion and necessary action/policies. The first step is to ensure that your policy has been updated for the latest best practices and legal requirements and ensure that your managers are educated on it. The next step is to keep an educated eye out for indicators that something has changed that could indicate SUD. Some of these indicators are unusual behavioral changes and performance and/or productivity decline. Keep communication lines open for discussion of these issues with your employees. If your employee shares a personal issue, be ready to provide professional resources to support them. If you have clear evidence of a problem, such as alcohol on the breath, do not let the situation escalate—deal with it

by talking directly with the employee. Describe the behavior and ask for their explanation—do not accuse. Launch an awareness program to foster open conversations, both for employees to know what the signs might be, but also so that employees can come forward if they are having a problem. Train managers on your Employee Assistance Program. If you don't have one, consider implementing one and ensure that it includes family benefits. SUD affects the whole family. When it comes to remote work, if the manager has set clear workday standards, it's important to be aware of missed calls or deadlines, decline in productivity/quality of work, or other unusual behavior. Whether remote or on-site, pay attention, record, and discuss changes you notice with employees.

* Psyc.com.net September 2021

** The Case for Kindness, American Psychological Association, August 2021

*** Mental Health Index by Lifeworks, May 2021